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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a year-long study of two preschool children's patterns of social adjustment and peer response. The theoretical orientation of the paper is interactionist. Patterns of adjustment and group response are described as social constructions which stigmatized the two children studied. The 24 children in the group came from traditional families. Most were 4-year-old girls. Data were obtained from multiple sources, including 34 hours of videotaped behavior in activity centers; 72 hours of participant observation field notes; transcripts from taped formal interviews with teacher, aide, and mothers; classroom artifacts; school records; reports; program descriptions; and material from children's cumulative folders. The two children on whom the study focused, Dan and Joan, were found to break rules by behaving aggressively; failing to recognize or accept routines, rules, and limits; and missing opportunities to have positive contact with peers. Reported findings describe Dan and Joan's rule-breaking behaviors and three general patterns of peer responses: exclusions, snubs, and put-downs. Characteristics of exclusions, snubs, and put-downs are discussed. Concluding remarks focus on social processes and intervention. (RH)

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Unsuccessful Social Adjustment Patterns in Young Children

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Unsuccessful Social Adjustment Patterns in Young Children

Children who are successful in social interactions with peers are likely to become individuals who are successful in social interactions throughout their lives. Children who consistently have difficulties getting along with agemates, who frequently have problems joining peers in play and work groups, or who seem constantly to be ignored or rejected by other children are likely to continue to have social problems as they approach and reach adulthood (Perry & Bussey, 1984). I have spent the past several years trying to understand the processes through which young children negotiate meaning, status, and personal identity in peer interactions. I have conducted a number of participant observation studies in kindergarten and preschool settings and have become especially interested in the processes through which certain children come to be stigmatized by peers as "outsiders." This paper reports an analysis of social adjustment patterns of two children in a preschool classroom and patterns of response to these children by their classroom peer group.

The theoretical orientation of the paper is interactionist in nature and patterns of adjustment and group response will be described as social constructions which, in effect, serve to stigmatize these two children as less than normal in relation to their peers.

Perspectives

This study approached the investigation of children's social behavior from an interactionist theoretical perspective and applied methodological principles, data gathering practices, and analytical techniques from the naturalistic research tradition (Blumer, 1969; Denzin, 1978; Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Interactionists take the view that participants in particular contexts construct social reality among themselves through the give and take processes of face-to-face interaction. Naturalistic research undertakes the reconstruction of that

reality from the perspectives of the social actors involved. Participant observation, interviewing, and the collection of unobtrusive data are the primary tools for gathering data which reflect naturally occurring social events. Analysis of these data is an inductive, systematic examination to determine the components of the social phenomena under investigation, the relationships among components, and their relationships to the wider contexts involved (Schwartz and Jacobs, 1979; Spradley, 1980).

Becker (1963) described a relativistic, interactionist view of deviance and stigmatization. From this perspective, deviant behavior is taken to be an interactive social phenomenon rather than merely an individual's failure to obey group rules. As Becker explained:

> Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender.' The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label. (p. 9)

In this view, group rules are relative entities, constructed by particular participants in particular contexts through the give and take processes of social interaction. Just as group rules are constructed, so are judgments regarding what constitutes rule breaking and what sanctions against those judged to be rule breakers ought to be. In Erickson's words, "deviance is not a property inherent in any particular kind of behavior, it is a property conferred upon that behavior by the people who come into direct contact with it" (1966, p. 6).

Goffman (1963) pointed out that when groups stigmatize individuals as outsiders, they construct a "stigma-theory, an ideology to explain his/(her) inferiority and to account for the danger he/(she) represents" (p. 5). Stigmatized individuals are treated as "not quite human" by the stigmatizing

group, the "normals" (see Webb, 1981). Barriers are constructed which systematically obstruct social interaction between stigmatized individuals and normals (Buckner, 1971; Pfuhl, 1980). Goffman (1963) and others (e.g., Mankoff, 1971; Pfuhl, 1980; Schur, 1971) have suggested that the outsider status assigned to rule breakers by normals is frequently internalized by those being stigmatized. Stigmatized individuals come to believe that the labels applied to them are accurate and act accordingly; i.e., they continue to violate group rules.

From the interactionist perspective, the effective analysis of deviance and stigmatization ought to focus on the transactions that take place between a social group and one who is viewed by that group as a rule breaker. In this view, the personal characteristics of deviants are of less concern than the process by which they come to be defined as outsiders and their reactions to that definition (Becker, 1963).

Methods

The data of the study include: (1) thirty-four hours of video-tape divided evenly among three classroom activity centers (i.e., sand/water table, dress-up/housekeeping area, and block area); (2) seventy-two hours of participant observation field notes (including notes on all video-taped activities); (3) transcripts from taped formal interviews with the classroom teacher, an undergraduate student assistant who worked in the classroom, and the mothers of the target children; (4) artifacts from the classroom including examples of children's work, written descriptions of children's products and 35 mm photographs; and (5) unobtrusive data such as school records, reports, program descriptions, and material from children's cumulative folders.

The study was begun the first week of school in the fall of 1986 and data collection in the classroom continued on a weekly basis throughout the school year, ending in June of 1987. One hour of video-taping per week was completed

through the year; each week, three activity centers were taped for 20 minutes. A technician handled the video-tape cameras and microphones.

Participant observation field notes were recorded on each of the thirty-five video-tape sessions and on seven additional visits. While taking notes, I sat or stood near the activity being observed, wrote as detailed notes as possible during observations, then "filled in" notes as soon as possible after leaving the research scene. These notes were typed into research protocols. During the analysis phase of the research, video-tape data involving the target children were examined to improve the depth and accuracy of the protocols. Informal interview data were included with field notes. Taped formal interviews were conducted near the conclusion of the school year.

Analysis of the data was guided by the Spradley (1980) Developmental Research Sequence. Patterns of classroom behavior were identified inductively using domain and taxonomic analysis procedures. Where data were analyzed using a priori categories typological procedures described by Goetz and LeCompte (1984) were used.

Setting

The study was conducted in a preschool classroom housed in a district administration building that had previously been an elementary school. The classroom was a fully equipped primary room with sufficient space for the preschool program. The preschool was in its second year of operation having been established as a model and funded with a grant from the Department of Education of the midwestern state in which the study was done.

The program was designed using a "whole child" approach and taking into account the developmental needs and abilities of 3, 4, and 5-year-old children. A variety of learning centers and interest areas were set up in the classroom including: reading/language arts, blocks, housekeeping, manipulatives, woodworking, science, art, and sand/water play. In addition, the school gymnasium and an outdoor play area were used for large muscle development. Children selected activities while the teacher (and other adults, usually including two parent

volunteers and two university education students) circulated asking and answering questions. The 24 children in the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning session of the preschool were the peer group of the study. Parents brought their children to the preschool and paid a nominal tuition.

The summary data below include all of the children in the session studied (specific descriptions of the two target children will be included in the findings). Of the 24 children: 8 were boys and 16 were girls; 4 were three-year-olds, 18 were four-year-olds, and 2 were five-year-olds on the first day of the school year during which the study was done; and all 24 were white. All but one child were living with both natural parents (this child was with mother and step-father) and all parents reported graduating from high school (the average years of schooling among parents was approximately 13.5). Male parents were divided among professional, white collar, and skilled craft occupations and 17 of 24 mothers listed themselves as homemakers. All children except one had one or more siblings, while no child had more than three (the average number was 1.54). As these data indicate, the preschool served what might be termed "traditional" families in which it was likely that father worked and mother stayed home. Children came from what appeared to be stable homes that probably included the mother, father, and two or three children.

The teacher in the study was selected specifically to teach at the model preschool because of her reputation as a child-centered educator able to create environments for children that fostered exploration and development. Indeed, the teacher was especially adept at setting up learning areas, then directing children's energies based on their interests and developmental abilities. She constantly modeled prosocial behavior and encouraged children to solve their own interpersonal conflicts, offering coaching and instruction where appropriate.

Findings

In a previous study, I analyzed the social interaction patterns of a six-year-old child named Lester and his kindergarten classmates (Hatch, 1988a). Lester was marked as an outsider by his peer group and the study's analysis focused on Lester's "rule breaking" behavior and on his classmates' "group responses" to him.

Lester exhibited three general types of behavior that were out of line with the norms and expectations of his classroom peer group. These rule breaking behavior types were: aggression (hitting, kicking, pushing, pinching, and using the threat of these); teasing (taunting, mocking, and mean spirited play); and contact incompetence (poorly developed expressive and receptive strategies for having positive social contacts with peers).

Peer group responses to Lester were organized into two patterns: exclusion occurred when Lester was denied access into previously established groups; and snubs were children's individual negative responses to Lester as an interaction partner.

I began the analysis of the present study using the rule breaking/group responses framework from the earlier research. One of my goals was to find out if patterns of rule breaking and group responses would be similar in Lester's kindergarten and a different setting (a preschool) with younger children. Overall, I am interested studying in the genesis of social stigmatization processes in young children: How do young children learn to be outsiders and to stigmatize others as less than normal? Although the larger question is not answered in this analysis, patterns of social interaction were discovered in the preschool peer group that paralleled Lester's experience of being labeled an outsider in his kindergarten.

This analysis focused on two preschoolers I have called Dan and Joan. Dan was 4 years 10 months when the study began and Joan was 3 years 6 months. Both children were white, lived in in-tact lower middle class families with parents who had high school educations. Dan was the oldest of three children, one sister was 3 and the

other 2 when the study began (the 3-year-old was a member of Dan's preschool class). Joan was an only child during the study. Dan was the largest child in his class. His mother described him as "about the size of second and third graders." In addition to being larger, he was overweight; his stomach frequently bulged out between his shirt and pants. Although Joan was about the same height as her 3-year-old classmates, she was heavy for her size. Both children were blond and had very fair complexions.

The analysis for this paper was done in the following steps: (1) all data were searched to identify interactions, artifacts, or interviews that included or referred to Dan or Joan; (2) social interactions involving the children of interest and their peers were examined; (3) patterns of behaving in Dan and Joan were identified and classified as "rule breaking" or "non-rule breaking"; (4) group responses to Dan and Joan were examined; (5) interview and artifact data were studied and related to previous analyses; (6) comparisons between Dan and Joan were made; and (7) a comparison to Lester's social problems in the earlier study was done. What follows is a report of rule breaking behaviors exhibited by Dan and Joan and group responses made by their classmates.

Rule Breaking

The following domains of rule breaking behavior were discovered in the peer social relations of both Dan and Joan: (1) aggression. (2) failure to recognize or accept routines, rules, and limits, and (3) missed contact opportunities. Naturally, these domains overlap throughout the data and in the real classroom, but each will be discussed separately to make an organized description possible.

In formal interviews, the classroom teacher and student assistant independently used the terms "pushy," "aggressive," and "loud" to describe both Dan's and Joan's behavior in their preschool. Dan and Joan consistently ordered other children about and demanded that others give up toys or materials with which they wished to play or work.

Dan and Joan were confrontational in their dealings with other children. They would grab toys with which others were playing and dare the children from whom they had taken the objects to do something about it. Both children were observed knocking down block structures or sand constructions of peers. Although other children in the classroom occasionally knocked down others' building products, no other child did so with the frequency of Dan or Joan. The excerpts below are examples of the aggressive, confrontational style that Dan and Joan exhibited in interactions with peers.

> Dan, Patrick, and Dennis are building with wooden blocks. Dan: "Hey guys, guess what?" Patrick: [sounding worried] "We're not changing our building." Dan" "Watch this!" Dan pushes down the structure they had been working on. Dan: "I'm building a airport." Patrick: "We're not building a airport this time." Dan pushes the blocks together, protecting them with his arms. Patrick: "You're not using all those blocks." Dan: "I had 'em first."

> Mary is playing with dolls in the housekeeping center. Joan enters the center, picks up a doll, then forces her body between Mary and the high-chair in which Mary has her doll. Joan pulls Mary's doll out of the high-chair. Mary tries to reach around to grab hold of the high-chair, saying: "No, I'm doing this one" (There is another high-chair not being used.) Joan pulls the high-chair away, raising it several inches off the floor, saying: "My baby!"

Both children were physically aggressive with classmates. Dan had confrontations that came to physical violence with several boys and girls in the class. Dan would stand toe-to-toe and hit and kick, sometimes using blocks or plastic toys as weapons. Joan's physical attacks were limited to other girls and were characterized by a quick hit, scratch, or kick, then moving away. In the first example, Ben's entry bid is rejected by Jack, leading to a kick fight. In the second, Joan hits one classmate in a struggle over where she will sit on the rug, then hits another out of apparent anger for being moved by the teacher.

> Ben (approaching Jack who is building in the block area): "Can I play with ya?" Jack: "No." After a five second pause, Dan: "But I play here every day." Jack: "No, I do." Dan: "No, I do. Every day they're (the blocks) are out, I'm over here." Dan begins driving his car on Jack's structure. Jack: "Hey Dan, get the car off there." Dan continues driving his car, looking at Jack [for a reaction]. Jack stands and moves closer to Dan. As he gets close enough, Dan leans back on one elbow and kicks Jack in the leg. The boys exchange several kicks and the teacher says in the background: "Five more minutes" (before clean-up time). Jack: "Five more minutes. You better stop kicking me. Five more minutes."

> Teacher stops the roll as she sees Joan hit Grace. Teacher: "Why did you hit her?" Joan does not respond. Teacher: "Did you want her to move?" No response. Teacher to Joan, as she moves the two girls apart: "Use your words." As teacher continues with the roll, Joan slides over and hits Debby.

In addition to being verbally and physically aggressive, both children demonstrated difficulties either recognizing or accepting routines, rules, and limits. Although it is clear in some interactions in the data that Dan and Joan understood the rules and expectations and chose to see "how far they could go" with their peers or with classroom adults, in other contexts, it is not clear that they were aware that they were breaking classroom norms or even norms of common courtesy.

In Dan's case, "not being aware" meant forgetting. He demonstrated on most occasions that he knew what was expected in the classroom. Occasionally he forgot and in one instance, when he and Jennifer were caught knocking down someone's block structure, responded to the teacher's prompt, "What's the rule?" with "Sometimes we forget."

Joan was much younger than Dan and appeared to have some difficulty understanding and adjusting to the structure and social expectations in the classroom. The teacher spent a great deal of time coaching Joan about classroom rules concerning such things as taking turns, staying in line, and allowing only so many children at a time to participate in certain activities. Over the entire year of the study, Joan either did not understand or just refused to accept classroom expectations such as these, a problem not shared by any of the other 3-year-olds or older students, except Dan. Joan would, for example, put on her smock and begin playing at the water table even though four children (the limit) were already there and had already told her she could not join them and why.

Both target children's behavior toward children and adults in the classroom frequently included an element of "pushing the limits." Both were frequently involved in conflicts with others and many times these conflicts were characterized by the children's seeing how far they could go with their interaction partners. The teacher noted that one of the reasons why Dan was unpopular with his classmates was his unwillingness to stay

within bounds accepted by everyone else. This, she said, made him unpredictable and therefore an undesirable playmate. On one occasion, Dan and Joan were involved together in a particularly powerful example of their shared capacity to push the limits, this time in an interaction involving a parent volunteer. Although this incident is the only time in the data in which Joan and Dan constructed a pushing the limits event together, it is an example of how such events were patterned by both children.

> Mrs. R (parent) sits down in the back of the group as teacher talks with the class gathered on the rug. As she sits down, Dan moves to be close to her. (Children frequently sit on the laps of classroom adults, but Dan is too large.) Joan moves behind Dan and kicks him in the back. Joan: "I wanna sit here." Dan: "I was sittin' here." Mrs. R tries to mediate: "There's room for both..." Dan gives a loud raspberry to Joan. Mrs. R to Dan: "Don't provoke her." Dan reaches down and begins playing with his shoes. Joan reaches out and grabs his shoelaces [just to be contentious]. Dan continues to make raspberries and he and Joan continue kicking and grabbing. Mrs. R [seeing she has been challenged]: "That's enough." Dan [in a mocking tone]: "He he he" and then he makes another loud raspberry. Mrs. R to Dan: "In two minutes you're going to the chair." Joan continues grabbing and kicking and Dan continues giving raspberries.

A final domain that characterized their rule breaking was a pattern of missed opportunities to have positive contact with peers. Both children were capable of having positive contacts with peers. Joan's positive contacts seemed to be limited to socio-dramatic play situations with other girls in the housekeeping center in which she accepted (and stayed within) the role of the baby of the family. In these settings, Joan followed the directions of her pretend family and followed the rules of the play well enough to be accepted by the others engaged in the play.

Dan's positive interactions were more varied and difficult to understand. On some occasions, Dan could be cooperative and even generous with his peers. He demonstrated fairly complex social strategies for entering groups and demonstrated some ability to adapt to changes in context. Since he was able to process social cues in a variety of classroom situations, it seems that in many contexts, he was either unaware that someone was trying to make social contact with him or chose not to pick up on opportunities to have positive interchanges with peers.

Missed contact opportunities do not have the same dramatic quality in the data as events involving conflict. The pattern is simple: a child approaches Dan or Joan and uses an entry move such as "What's that?" or comes and stands nearby (waiting for an invitation to join), or begins playing nearby (for a description of pre-school entry strategies, see Corsaro, 1979); Dan or Joan respond in ways that do not allow entry to be negotiated; and the child moves on. One excerpt, in which Joan missed Brett's attempt to receive her recognition for his work on a puzzle, demonstrates the pattern (for an analysis of peer evaluation in early childhood settings, see Hatch, 1988b).

> Brett is on the edge of the block area rug putting together a puzzle. As he completes the puzzle, he picks it up and walks to the sink where Joan is drying her hands. He holds the puzzle forward, saying: "See." Joan turns away [in a dramatic gesture] and stomps off.

Again, it is difficult to know why Joan and Dan missed so many opportunities to have positive contact with peers. Joan, in the example above and in other interactions, may simply have not known the expectations associated with contact attempts and reacted in defensive ways to protect her face (see Hatch, 1987b). Dan may have become so preoccupied with what he was doing that he was not aware when others were making friendly approaches. In any case, these children did frequently miss opportunities to have positive interactions with other children.

It should be noted that although Dan and Joan shared the general rule breaking behavior patterns described above, there were important differences in their social behavior as well. One of the major differences within the area of rule breaking is that Dan taunted and teased his classmates in ways that Joan was not observed doing. Dan could be very mean to his peers. As in the example below, he sometimes dominated children, then rubbed it in when they were reluctant to defend themselves.

> Dan and Dusty are building in the block center. Dan begins swinging his arms and knocking pieces off Dusty's building, saying "Yea, yea" with each swing. Dusty pleads: "Don't, don't." Dan continues knocking the building down and Dusty looks for help, tries to catch the teacher's eye, and says: "Dan, I built that." Dan taunts: "What do you want me to do, knock down more blocks?" Dan continues to knock down the building while Dusty tries to put some blocks back. Dan: "Hold it! This is in backwards." Dan knocks away the pieces Dusty has replaced.

Another difference between the children was that Dan seemed constantly to be seeking attention and feedback from classroom adults and peers. He frequently, and often loudly, called out "Hey, looka this!" or "Look at my ...." when he was working on a task or building in the block area. When interviewed, both the teacher and student assistant noted Dan's need for constant attention from them and his classmates. Similar bids for attention or evaluation were not observed in Joan's behavior and the frequency and urgency of Dan's attention seeking seemed well beyond that of other children in the group or other young children observed in a previous study (Hatch, 1988b).

Distinctive in Joan's social behavior was her intermittent denial of her name or age. Her mother reported that Joan had an imaginary friend when she was younger named Patty. Joan on occasions refused to be called Joan and demanded that others call her Patty. She also claimed she was five-years-old in situations in which age was discussed. Neither other children's chiding nor adult's prompts could influence Joan to drop her assumed name or age.

Group Responses

Three general patterns of peer response to Dan and Joan were discovered in the data: exclusions, snubs, and put-downs. Each pattern will be described in an attempt to characterize how Dan and Joan were treated by peers in their classroom. These group responses do not represent actions taken in immediate reaction to the rule breaking behaviors above. Immediate reactions (e.g., fighting back, telling the teacher, bickering, etc.) are interesting, but the analysis here focuses on patterns of interaction between the group and Dan and the group and Joan that characterize the overall relationship of these two children and their peer group.

Both children had the experience of being excluded from play and work groups in the classroom. Exclusions occur when two or more children work together to keep other children from joining their previously established groups. Examples follow.

> Ben is playing on his own with assorted plastic vehicles. A few feet away, Jeffrey, Dennis, and Dusty are playing together with blocks. Ben moves closer, making motor noises with his motorcycle. Jeffrey: "You're not playin' with us!" Ben tosses the motorcycle at Jeffrey's feet, saying: "You can have this motorcycle." Jeffrey kicks it away:

"I don't want it." Dan watches the boys build and inches closer. Dennis: "You're not helping us."

Carla, Jennifer, and Mary are building in the block area. Joan walks up and stands next to where the girls are playing. Carla [recognizes the entry bid]: "You're not helping." Joan: "Why?" Jennifer: "No!" Carla: "Mary, we don't want Joan's help, do we?" Jennifer: "We hate Joan, huh?"

Snubs were children's individual negative responses to Dan and Joan as interaction partners. Snubs occur when contact attempts are ignored by others, when bids for interaction are not responded to although both parties know that a contact attempt has been made. Goffman (1967) points out that, except when wide discrepencies in status exist between interactants, deference rituals compel individuals to respond to others who are seeking to have contact with them. As the examples below demonstrate, children in this study snubbed Dan and Joan on occasions when they were seeking social interaction. Dan's status as a desirable playmate relative to Jeffrey is made clear in the first excerpt; and Joan experiences a snub, even when she tries to make contact using a subordinate role, in the second example.

Brett is playing with a collection of small farm objects when Ben and Jeffrey arrive at the center from different parts of the room. Brett: "Hey Jeffrey, you can play with me. Just be careful not to knock over my fence." Ben leaves.

Joan approaches Debby in the dress-up area: "Can I try on some clothes?" Debby does not respond. Joan reaches out with both arms: "Mommy, hey mommy, can I try on my clothes?" Debby turns her shoulder to Joan's outstretched arms and does not respond.

Put-downs were another domain of peer responses to Dan and Joan. Included in this domain are name calling, slamming, and treating them as incompetents by ordering them around and using a tone that signalled the speakers' superiority and disdain.

Dan's put-downs were usually more direct than those of Joan. Children sometimes called Dan names ("Old Bossy"; "Meany") or made comments about his size ("You're nothin' but a five-year-old man"). On other occasions, they put him down by talking about how they would exclude him from activities away from school.

Shelby is talking about her upcoming birthday party and several children have gathered around her in the housekeeping center. Shelby to Audrey: "You can come to my birthday." Audrey: "Can Cherry and Charlotte come?" Shelby: "All girls can come." Dan: "How about boys, can they come?" Shelby: "All boys can come but you and your sister."

Although there were a few examples of children ordering Dan around and treating him as an incompetent ("You don't have to be so bossy."), this pattern dominated the put-downs experienced by Joan. It was very common in the data for other girls to treat Joan as if she had no feelings or competence. No other children in the class, including the other three-year-old girls, received this kind of treatment. In the excerpt below, Joan experiences several of these type put-downs at the expense of Jill, one of the most dominant girls in the peer group.

> Jill, Joan, and Debby are in the housekeeping area. Joan puts on black slippers and walks by Jill, smiling warmly into her face. Jill does not return the warm look. Joan picks up the phone and grabs it away. Joan [with upset voice]: "I was just playin'." Joan moves to the table and begins singing to herself. The phone dings and no one responds. Joan: "I heard the bell." Jill [with agitated voice]: "What?" Joan: " I heard the bell." Jill: "No you didn't!" (Later in the same interaction event) Joan picks up a doll and asks Jill: "Can I rock the baby? Can I rock the baby?" Jill: "No." Jill takes the doll from Joan. Joan follows Jill across the playhouse area with her arms out saying: "Jill, I want to ..." Jill interrupts by knocking Joan's arms away and going about her business.

Conclusions

This analysis documents some of the processes through which two young children came to be treated as outsiders by their peers. These processes have been described as socially constructed: they are created in interactions involving the children themselves and their peer group. The processes described here parallel similar stigmatization processes discovered in a previous study.

On the last day of the study which was also the last day of school, Dan was involved in one of his usual confrontations at the block center. He and Jack were exchanging blows because Dan had knocked down Jack's block construction.

> Jack: "Why do you always hafta knock my stuff down?" Dan: "I wouldn't do that if you would be my friend. I wouldn't have to do that." Jack: "I am your friend. I'm half your friend and half not your friend."

This brief exchange captures some of the confusing nature of Dan and Joan's problematic behavior among their classmates. They seem trapped in a recursive cycle of negative social relations. The pattern that characterizes Dan and Joan's social behaviors is perceived by the peer group to be rule breaking. At the same time, the pattern of peer responses

(exclusions, snubs, and put-downs) serves to reduce these outsiders chances of learning and practicing new (more "acceptable") behaviors, which keeps the negative cycle going. Studies of "popular" children have suggested that popular children have well developed interaction skills and are operating within a self-perpetuating social circle which reinforces their competences and stimulates further growth (Moore, 1981). This offers a stark contrast to the cycle experienced by children like Dan and Joan. The feedback children in the negative cycle get from their interaction attempts is evidence of their own inadequacy.

The experience of being labeled an outsider in early school experiences may have far-reaching consequences for young children. After reviewing several studies of social adjustment in school, Perry and Bussey (1984) conclude: "Children who are actively rejected by their peers in grade school stand an above-average risk of dropping out of school, of becoming delinquent, of being diagnosed as neurotic or psychotic, and of even committing suicide." Of course, experiencing the processes of stigmatization described here does not determine that Dan or Joan or others like them will suffer the troubles listed. Understanding the dynamics of labeling individuals as deviants and the frequency with which such labels are internalized by those being stigmatized does provide an explanation of how such troubles may evolve. Early labeling influences children's definitions of themselves and their behavior in relationship to others. The process of labeling stabilizes deviance and can lead to a cycle which causes individuals to begin to see themselves as "career deviants"; i.e., those whose identities and behaviors are principally defined in terms of deviance (Becker, 1963; Pfuhl, 1980).

This study treats the definition of an individual as "outsider" as a transaction between a social group and one who is viewed by that group as a rule breaker. By understanding the processes involved in transacting such a definition in classrooms, teachers are given a framework for intervening appropriately. Ways of guiding unpopular or isolated children's social development in classrooms are suggested in several articles (e.g., Rogers and Ross, 1986; Roopnarine and Honig, 1985). These approaches focus on assisting the outsider and include such suggestions as "help children learn to ask questions,

observe a group before entering, improve their communication skills, and talk about their feelings and desires" (Rogers and Ross, 1986, p. 17). What may be missing in these approaches are ways of intervening when groups of children are stigmatizing a peer. I have suggested a broader framework I call "teacher role-sets for classroom social development." Role-sets include: (1) establishing classroom contexts, i.e., the physical organization of space, task expectations, and participant configurations; (2) modeling appropriate social behaviors in active and strategic ways; (3) coaching children to recognize what may be problematic in their behavior and to try alternatives; (4) and teaching children to become aware of themselves as social actors, to use appropriate and effective interaction strategies, and to develop sensitivity to the needs and intentions of others (Hatch, 1987a). This broader framework encourages teachers to deal with both the individual and the larger social group.

Researchers interested in the study of deviance and social processes in school may find this study useful. The interactionist approach taken offers a conceptual framework which allows for the analysis of stigmatizing processes. By describing stigmatization processes experienced by children in a variety of social contexts, researchers may be able to construct a theory for explaining childhood deviance. This study represents a further step toward constructing such a theory. In addition, educational researchers and other scientists interested in studying schooling as a social phenomenon may find the methods and findings useful as investigations of social processes in school are continued.

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